

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL.

OUR WASHINGTON LETTER.

The Direct Tax Upon States and the Claims of the States Against the General Government.

(From Our Regular Correspondent.)

WASHINGTON, D. C., January 29. The officers of the Treasury Department are required and do set off sums of money due from the United States to any State against any sums that may be due from that State. They have for many years regarded the unpaid direct tax levied upon the United States and apportioned among the States by the act of August 5, 1861, as a debt due from the delinquent State, and have treated the same as a proper set-off against any moneys due to the States. The sum of \$35,555 was appropriated to pay the State of Georgia in 1883, but the Secretary of the Treasury declined to make the payment, because he found that on the books of the Treasury Georgia was charged with the sum of \$512,950, which had been repaid since 1865 as a debt due from that State to the United States, being the balance of the direct tax apportioned to that State. A bill introduced by Mr. Hammond, of Georgia, and reported favorably, forbids the officers of the Treasury to treat the unpaid balances of the direct tax as a set-off against any claim in favor of a State. The amount of the tax upon the State of Virginia was \$220,071, of which \$515,569 had been paid, leaving a balance of \$233,510 due to the United States. The amount apportioned to West Virginia has all been paid. It was \$208,479.

Nearly seventeen and a half millions of the original twenty millions levied upon the States has been paid; and a minority of the committee insist that the principle of set-off shall be maintained against the fourteen States that have not paid in full the remaining \$2,500,000 of direct tax. More than two millions of the unpaid balance was charged to Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. The minority say they will consent to release the delinquent States provided the States that have paid in full are reimbursed the entire amount that they have paid respectively; that if Illinois, for instance, has paid in full, there is no reason why Virginia or Georgia should be released from the claims of Virginia against the United States, which are now in charge of Mr. Trigg, of the Committee on Claims, there will be no objection to applying the principle of offset.

GARLAND'S ANSWER.

The Controversy Between the Senate and the Administration.

(Special Telegram to the Dispatch.)

WASHINGTON, January 29.—The answer of Attorney-General Garland to the demand of the Senate for papers relating to the conduct of their officers by certain suspended officials will probably bring the controversy between the Senate and the Administration to a speedy issue in open Senate.

The first step in that direction was made to-day by the offering of a resolution that the discussion of nominations shall take place in open session. This will give the Republicans a chance to criticize the Administration in public, so that what they say will be sure to get into the newspapers. They claim that the President has made removals for partisan reasons and is trying to hide the fact behind the plea that the Senate is attempting to encroach upon the prerogative of the Executive.

The Platt resolution was not offered by authority of the Republican caucus, but it is understood to be endorsed by many, if not all, of the Republican senators. If the resolution should be adopted the most probable result will be to call for papers relating to suspensions and removals to be sent to the Senate in legislative session, which would meet the point of the objection conveyed in the Attorney-General's communication to-day.

Senator Edmunds notified Senator Beck to-day that it is the intention of the Republican senators to discuss removals and appointments in public, and get at the desired information from the members of the Cabinet in person if it cannot be obtained in any other way.

The Democratic senators are to hold a caucus to-morrow to consider the latest phase of the controversy.

XLIX. CONGRESS.

WASHINGTON, January 29, 1886.

Senate.

In the Senate to-day Mr. Wallhall presented the credentials of the re-election of Hon. J. S. George, United States senator from Mississippi. The credentials were read and Mr. George was sworn in.

Mr. Ingalls, from the Committee on Judiciary, reported favorably a bill relieving from political disabilities George S. Storrs, of the State of Texas, and on Mr. Ingalls's motion the bill was passed.

Among the bills introduced was one by Mr. Call, at the request, he said, of the Governor of Florida, to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to settle and pay the claim of the State of Florida on account of expenditures made in suppressing Indian hostilities, in introducing the bill Mr. Call said that a similar bill has been before the Forty-eighth Congress, but at the request of the then Governor of Florida it was allowed to remain unacted on because a Washington claimant named Wallis claimed commissions amounting to \$62,000 for "services in connection with it." As the amount of each allowance by Congress was only \$2,000 there would be but little of the money left after paying such alleged commissions. Mr. Call regarded it as a reflection upon the members of the Senate and House that the money should be paid or contracted to be paid for services never rendered in connection with legislation, while the soldiers who had rendered hard service to the State and the widows and orphans of such soldiers went unpaid and unprovided for. Under any circumstances he regarded it as a palpable scandal that a case such as this should be paid to lawyers or pretended lawyers or agents for votes to be given in Congress.

The idea of paying \$62,000 of the State's claim of \$2,000 should be rejected by public condemnation; and Mr. Call desired, from his place in the Senate, to give public expression to this opinion. There were no services to be rendered. Mr. Call said, in connection with such a bill. The question involved was one well settled by the history of the country, and legislation on it was nothing but a disgrace. He believed, however, that the Government of the United States should pay the interest on the claim of the State.

Mr. Platt submitted a resolution for its reference to the Committee on Rules, and it was so referred, providing that executive nominations shall hereafter be considered in open session.

At 2 o'clock Mr. Vest took the floor in opposition to Mr. Harrison's bill.

In conclusion Mr. Vest said he would breathe a word of protest to divide the Territory by a line running north

and south on the 101st parallel of longitude, so as to provide for the keeping of the unsettled western side in a territorial condition.

Mr. Logan then took the floor, but gave way to Mr. Dawes for a motion to adjourn.

The Senate then, at 5:05 P. M., adjourned till Monday next.

House of Representatives.

After a few private messages had been reported by the committee the House, at 12:22, went into committee on the whole Mr. Hatch, of Missouri, in the chair on the private calendar. The first measure on the calendar was Mr. McMillan's bill providing for the payment of "Fourth-of-July" claims.

Mr. Geddes, of Ohio, explained that the bill comprised 943 claims, distributed among eleven States and one Territory, and called for the expenditure of \$229,000.

After a short debate the bill was laid aside for favorable report. A long discussion arose over the next bill referring to the Court of Claims for adjudication the claim of the personal representative of C. M. Briggs, deceased, for the proceeds of captured cotton now in the Treasury. Several amendments were offered, spoken to at length, and subsequently withdrawn.

The first amendment upon which a vote was reached was one offered by Mr. Holman, authorizing the court to determine the claim under the provisions of the Bowman act, and to report to Congress the cause of delay in the prosecution and prosecution of the claim. This was rejected—yeas 44; nays 62.

On motion of Mr. Rowell, of Illinois, an amendment was adopted directing the court to inquire into the loyalty of C. M. Briggs and of the person from whom he obtained the title.

Mr. Gibson, of Maine, suggested the propriety of amending the bill so as to require the court to determine whether the cotton grew on loyal ground, as picked by loyal hands, and was itself loyal.

On motion of Mr. Burrows, of Michigan, an amendment was adopted providing that if Briggs or the person from whom he derived the title shall be found to have been disloyal the claim shall be dismissed.

The committee then rose and reported both bills to the House, when they were passed.

The House then, at 4:30 o'clock, took a recess until 7:30 P. M., the evening session to be for the consideration of pension bills.

In the course of the evening session Mr. Crisp, of Georgia, made a strong speech against the policy of increasing the rate of pensions, and in opposition to the repeal of the limitation on the arrears-of-pension acts. He quoted from statistics to show that if the proposed legislation be left in a bankrupt condition, and asserted that one third of the Union soldiers enlisted in the late war were applicants for pensions, which, if granted, would cost, though no increase were made in the rate, the enormous sum of \$125,000,000 per year. It did not appear from this that republics were ungrateful. It had been estimated that if the repeal law was passed it would take \$100,000,000 of the treasury \$100,000,000 of which sum there would be an immediate payment of \$4,000,000. This would run up the pension appropriations for 1886, if not another name was placed on the rolls, to \$100,000,000. No Government had the right to take from the people in taxation a dollar more than was absolutely necessary to the economical administration of the Government and to provide for the support of its military and naval forces. Was there never to be a reduction of taxation? Were the expenditures always to come up to and even exceed the receipts which were now obtained from exorbitant taxation? The people he represented did not seek to avoid any just burdens that were put upon them by reason of their participating in the blessings of this Government. They willingly contributed even of their poverty to whatever was necessary for the grandeur, glory, and prestige of the country. They were willing to pay whatever was necessary to act in good faith and liberally to the soldiers, but he submitted that it was hardly right to ask them to go further than that. All he invoked at the hands of the House was that the same care and the same scrutiny and principles of economy that actuated it in every other appropriation should be applied to the consideration of the pension bills. He would not be parsimonious. He would be just and liberal, but he did think there ought to be some stopping place.

The House passed fifty private pension bills, and at 9:45 adjourned till Monday.

The President and the Senate.

(By Telegram to the Dispatch.)

WASHINGTON, January 29.—The Attorney-General has sent a letter to the Senate in answer to a resolution for "all documents and papers in relation to the management and conduct of the office of United States Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama," in which acknowledgment of a receipt of the resolution he says that he has referred to the President of the United States directs me to say that the papers which were in this Department relating to the fitness of J. D. Bennett, recently nominated to the said office, having been already sent to the Judiciary Committee of the Senate, and the papers and documents which are mentioned in the said resolution and still remaining in the custody of this Department having exclusive reference to the suspension by the President of George M. Dunstan, the late incumbent of the office of district Attorney of the United States for the Southern District of Alabama, it is not considered that public interests will be promoted by a compliance with said resolution and the transmission of the papers and documents therein mentioned to the Senate in executive session.

Very respectfully,
(Signed) R. H. GARLAND,
Attorney-General.

The Alabama Claims Commission.

(By Telegram to the Dispatch.)

WASHINGTON, January 29.—First-Comptroller-of-Currency Durham has just finished the investigation of the accounts of the Court of Commissioners of Alabama Claims covering the period from April 1 to August 31, 1885, and including what were rejected by the State Department, has disallowed items amounting to \$22,560 for the same reason that he stopped the payment of warrants for items of a similar character in August last—to-wit, that they were not warranted by law. He has, however, leaving the accounts of Gibson Brothers for printing due to the court, but he has one point on which he charges against this firm of overcharges and fraudulent measurements. The Comptroller reports that there was no written contract between the court and Gibson Brothers, but that the work was done under verbal contract, the obligations of which were fully complied with by the firm. The Comptroller criticizes the action of the court in not having reduced said contract to writing, and expresses the general opinion that contracts involving large amounts of money should always be so made.

SENSATIONAL TURN.

IN THE ARMSTRONG TRIAL.

Mann, the Cincinnati Editor, Disappears—What was Told a Reporter at the Hotel To-Day.

(Special Telegram to the Dispatch.)

ATLANTA, Ga., January 29.—When the name of E. E. Mann, editor of the Cincinnati Post, was called in the trial of Dr. Armstrong, he failed to respond, an affidavit, however, sworn to and signed by him in Cincinnati, was presented. This action created a decided sensation, as Mann has come all the way from Cincinnati to testify. His absence, therefore, raised an inquiry. It was given out that he had left the city and that he would not appear as a witness at the trial.

A reporter called at the Kimball and asked the clerk if Mr. E. E. Mann was in his room.

"No," said the clerk; Mr. Mann has not been about the hotel to-day. A number of people have called to see him, but he was not to be found. My impression is that he was not here last night."

"When did he pay his bill?"

"He did not pay it at all. It was paid for him."

"Who paid it?"

"Mr. Walter G. Charlton."

"This afternoon."

"I hear that Mr. Mann's room this morning appeared as though it was not occupied last night. That is, the bed was not tumbled up, things thrown around carelessly, etc."

"Well, about that I can't say. I don't know of any one about the house that could tell whether the room was occupied or not, except the chambermaid, who cleaned it up, and she is not on duty now."

Considerable interest was felt in the city by those interested in the trial as to why Mr. Mann should have so unceremoniously left the city. It was said by some that some things were known concerning him which would be charged to him if he remained here. It was furthermore stated that it could be proved that he had borne two names. This was admitted by Mann, January 29. The fire which originated in the Ryan Drug Company's house is raging furiously at 8:30 P. M., and spreading rapidly to the foot of Schultz & Co.'s boot and shoe-house, in the heart of the wholesale center of the city. Explosions are heard every minute or so, as the flames come in contact with explosive chemicals. At least half a million dollars' worth of property is in the building, and the fire is hopelessly involved. The addition of fire and the fire-drawers for blocks around. The whole fire department is at work, but cannot control the fury of the flames. 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